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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Wednesday, August 11, 1937

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SUBJECT: "TIPS FOR FOOD SHOPPERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

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More news today for food-shoppers. More news about probable trends in supplies and prices of seasonal foods.

Another fortnight has rolled around and brought again the bulletin from the Federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration reporting the best judgement of the economists on the way food prices will go in the near future.

To begin with, the economists predict large supplies of vegetables this month and seasonal increases in fruit. In fact, they say that supplies of both fruits and vegetables during the rest of this year will be larger than last year. The products that usually reach their seasonal peak in August are: cantaloups, green corn, peaches, pears, nectarines, okra and eggplant. Though August brings more apples and grapes to the market than July, the largest supply of these fruits does not come until October. Watermelons, however, have already reached their peak so shipments will probably decrease rapidly until the season ends in September.

The economists predict that August will be the month for lowest prices in cantaloups. During August supplies move by truck from fields near consumption centers and this reduces transportation costs. Production in the States that are shipping cantaloups this month will probably be considerably larger than a year ago and well above average. But by September few cantaloups will be on the market and the season for them ends in October.

Peaches will probably be cheaper this month when shipments from the late-producing States will hit the season's peak. The total peach crop will be about one-fifth larger than a year ago but practically all the increase this year comes in the late-producing States which market their peaches during August and September. Since production in the late shipping States will be about double a year ago, prices of peaches this month will probably be lower than a year ago. In September fewer peaches will be on the market and in October the peach season ends.

If you are fond of pears, you'll be glad to know that a record-size pear crop is due this year. Pears are ripening a little later than usual so they will be coming to market in September instead of August. Most eating pears come from the Pacific Coast States--from California, Oregon and Washington, where growers expect a big crop this year. Because of the large supplies on the market, pears will probably be cheaper than a year ago.

Now some tips about <u>vegetables</u>. First, about potatoes, Large supplies and lower prices of potatoes will probably continue all during 1937. The usual

seasonal price decline will probably come during the next few months. August supplies of potatoes come largely from New Jersey, but all the States shipping this month will probably produce more potatoes than average.

As for sweetpotatoes, the 1937 crop is already moving to market and prices probably will be downward during both October and November. The economists say that this year's crop of sweetpotatoes appears to be slightly smaller than average but that it is larger than the 1936 crop.

Now about that vegetable which is the great favorite for salads the year around--lettuce. Lettuce will probably be cheapest during the summer and will then follow its usual price trend upward until early December. The seasonal low point in lettuce prices usually comes in summer when supplies are at their peak and come mainly from local market gardens. Lettuce is now coming to market from the late-producing States where a crop much larger than a year ago is expected. Prices of lettuce have been going up recently but still they are lower than a year ago.

By the way, a large pack of all important canned vegetables is on the schedule for this year. More acres have been planted to canning crops this year than last, with the exception of tomatoes. Growers are producing record canning crops of green peas and snap beans this year many more than a year ago. But this year's canned asparagus pack will be slightly smaller than that of 1936. Wholesale prices of nearly all canned vegetables have gone down since early June because of the prospects for so much canning of vegetables this year.

Finally, some news about meat prices. "The outlook remains unchanged," say the economists. They predict higher prices for pork and better-grade beef. But they say that lamb and lower grade beef may go down in price somewhat. They also expect poultry, the price of poultry, to go down seasonally because so much is now in cold storage. But prices of heavy-weight poultry may go up because supplies of this type are only slightly larger than a year ago.

That concludes the news for food shoppers today. By the middle of the month, I shall have another bulletin on price trends of foodstuffs to report to you.

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